

The Poor *ENGLISH* Clergyman's

# COMPLAINT:

OR, AN

## INVECTIVE

Against the

Admitting the *Popish* Clergy to be Immediate Preachers in the  
CHURCH of *ENGLAND*.

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By S. D. an Experienc'd Traveller, and Well-wisher to  
the CHURCH's Progress.

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**W**E cannot but be sensible of the many Reduc'd Clergy that are up and down these Kingdoms, especially in *England*, by reason of the late Disbanding so many, both of the Land and Sea Forces; and there are, no question, several others that came lately from *Scotland*, the greatest part of all which are to this day destitute of a competent Employ, having Families perhaps to maintain besides themselves. Now I confess it is wholly incumbent upon the Bishop of *London* to make all possible Provision or Interest for these distressed Gentlemen, which as a kind Father, and faithful Steward of the Church, he all along endeavour'd to the utmost of his Ability, either by entertaining them himself in Places under his own Jurisdiction, or by recommending them to others of his Brethren; but the Burthen lying too heavy upon his Lordship, by reason of their great Number, I think his Brother Bishops, both of *England* and *Ireland*, ought in Charity to bear a part with him in taking due care of these Worthy Men, rather than to entertain so many of the Pope's Out-cast, as they have so undevotedly done in this Kingdom in these our latter Days, to the unspeakable Shame and Disgrace of the Church of *England*; for this I can safely depose upon Oath, and bring several Hundreds to testify the same, that I have found as I Travelled in this Country, many of these new (doubtful) Converts, in considerable Places and Stations in our Church; and that they are for the most part as great Debauchees as any of the Country they live in: Now what can be a greater Discredit or Hindrance to the Progress of the Church than the Admission of such Fellows?

And as to their Preaching, it is most abominably silly; they are laugh'd and hiss'd at by all Judicious Men, and many times even by the Mobb, that hears them: For how can it be otherwise expected from such sort of People? We all well know (whatever they may pretend) that they are Men of no great Learning or Experience, having for the most part of their Days convers'd hardly with any other thing than their Mass Book, the reading of which has been hitherto thought Qualification enough for a *Popish* Priest. In short, you that are competent Judges will find 'em upon the least Examination to be no



other than Poor, Weak, Empty Vessels, altogether unacquainted with our perfect way of Teaching; and others there are that can hardly speak or write a true *English* Sentence, or read it well when it is set before them; and now that they can be rightly qualified to teach us *English* Men I shall leave it to your selves to judge. In the next place you may be sure that they knew (from their very first Setting forth) as much of our Principles of Religion, as they do now at their pretended Conversion; and if the Church of *Rome* had got the upper hand of us in these Kingdoms, they would have seen the Church of *England* laid in Dust and Ashes before ever they'd come near it, to Embrace it, or design any other kindness to it, than a total Ruin or Destruction of the same; and the better to confirm this Belief in you, pray consider how few of them came over to us in the late Reign, to what there is coming now-a-days: Besides it is to be provid'd that many of these Men that have been lately received, and that are still coming to be Ministers in our Church, are nothing else but the very Dregs and Off-scouring of Purgatory, that is, a People that is no longer to be entertained by the *Roman* Church by reason of their often repeated Lewdness and Debaucheries: Now after all I must confess, altho' many of them have been wicked Men, and have taught the People what they disbelieved themselves, that their Conversion may be sincere enough, and that the encouraging of them in some respects may be a means to save theirs, as well as the Souls of others, that is, if right methods are taken therein; and I cannot find out a more effectual way for the Probation of the sincerity of such than immediately after their admission into our Church, to send them up and down the Kingdom (as Christ did his Apostles) to convert their own Country Folks, and teach them in their own Language, and so to allow each of them a Yearly competency, which may be easily raised by the Contributions of our Bishops and other Benefic'd Clergy, and then according to their good Services, and the Testimony of a sincere Conversion, it would be but Justice in us to reward them; and hereby, no doubt, there may in a little time a great advantage accrue to our Flourishing Church: but immediately to receive them into our Ecclesiastical Livings upon an Oral Recantation, without any further Proof of them, is certainly a great oversight, and in time may prove a greater prejudice to our Church than we are aware of. Besides, it is a great discouragement to many worthy Gentlemen of our own Nation and Country, that have been all along bred and educated in our University, and that are wanting Employ even at this time, to have such Men received and encouraged before them; Men that we know not where they were bred, or from whence they came, but only by a few Letters Testimonial.

And now upon the whole, I would not have our Reverend Bishops and Fathers of the Church take this amiss, or as design'd to undervalue their Judgments, as it they knew not what they did; no doubt their design herein is very good and for the advantage and prosperity of the Church, which would prove effectually so, if the same measures were taken that are here propos'd: But my chief design in sending this Paper abroad, is to inform their Lordships with the general dissatisfaction of the People, not only that they should be the Sheep of such Pastors, but that their own Sons, Friends, Relations, and Acquaintance, that have been from their Cradles bred up Protestants, and that have had their *Totum Vitium* bestow'd in their Education for the Church's Service, and that would rather die a thousand Deaths than once revolt from their Faith, should be wanting Bread, and others at the same time received into good Benefices.

F I N I S.